

MERIT Criteria

MERIT funding is awarded on a competitive basis each year. The funds are defense-wide research, development, test and evaluation (RDT&E) monies. Funds in this category are used for advanced technology development with the intent of demonstrating the general military utility or cost reduction potential of technology when applied to military applications. MERIT, in particular, is a competitive funding process within the tactical DSRP and candidate projects must meet the following seven criteria to be eligible to complete:

- Improvement of national space reconnaissance contribution to military operations (national space reconnaissance is defined as NRO satellites, sensors, payloads, and their associated tasking, processing, exploitation, and dissemination.)
- Joint service applications.
- Address specific Combatant Command Thrusts.
- Significant application to tactical operators. (Project proposals must address specific contributions.)
- Research and Development prototyping.
- Near-term (1-2 years) employment of project results.
- Transition to acquisition, operation, and maintenance or enter the National Reconnaissance Program (NRP) baseline.



Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps
Intelligence Department
Intel Plans & Policy/TENCAP Branch

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United States Marine Corps

Exploitation of National Systems (TENCAP & MERIT)



Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps
Intelligence Department
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TENCAP Overview

The Marine Corps Tactical Exploitation of National Capabilities Program (TENCAP) is a research and development (R&D) activity within HQMC Intelligence Department, Intelligence Plans and Policy (IPP). Created in 1977 in response to congressional authorization, TENCAP allocates resources and manpower to research and develop new and innovative intelligence projects with the intent of improving the delivery of national systems data to the lowest possible tactical levels. TENCAP pursues R&D initiatives in concert with the requirements provided by Marine Corps Systems Command (MCSC), Marine Corps Combat Development Command (MCCDC), Marine Corps Warfighting Lab (MCWL), and the operating forces.

TENCAP and the Operating Forces

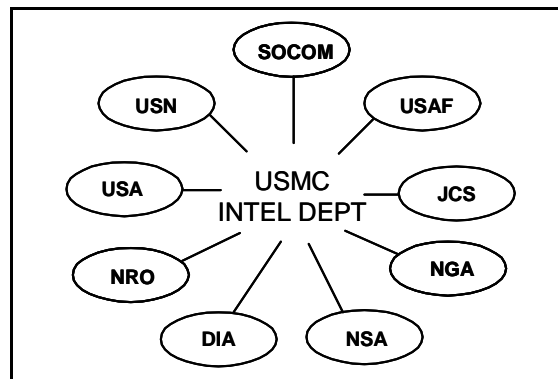
Operating force input ensures that the TENCAP focus continues to address those gaps that persist between national systems data and tactical users. Marine Corps TENCAP pursues an aggressive outreach program consisting of regularly scheduled conferences, visits to the Marine Forces, and continuous communication with those units involved in TENCAP projects. We welcome involvement from any Marine organization who wants to improve their ability to access and use data collected by national systems.

Strategy

- Participate in national reconnaissance community activities.
- Inter-service coordination.
- Intra-service coordination.
- Facilitate and conduct advanced reconnaissance technology demonstrations.
- Transition R&D projects to applicable USMC or other organizations for testing and fielding to operating forces.

External Relationships

- TENCAP Senior Officer Review Group
- National Intelligence Community
- Defense Space Reconnaissance Program (DSRP) Working Group
- Military Exploitation of Reconnaissance and Intelligence Technology (MERIT) Working Group
- Service TENCAP Offices
- Science Advisors
- JCS Special Projects
- Service Program Managers
- TENCAP Conferences
- DoD R&D Labs



MERIT Program

The NRO's Deputy Director for Military Support (DDMS), Programs & Assessments Directorate (PAD) manages the MERIT program. The MERIT Program applies funds to highly selective R&D activities designed to increase the utility and accessibility of National Reconnaissance Office (NRO) data for practical operations support. The program is chartered to develop and prototype capabilities to provide more timely, higher quality intelligence to the warfighter and to improve the warfighter's ability to exploit that information. Annually, DDMS/PAD solicits proposals from the acquisition, intelligence, scientific, and operational communities for projects to be funded under the MERIT program.

MERIT Successes

Several MERIT projects have transitioned to successful programs of record and are currently enabling and improving intelligence support to military operations worldwide. Examples include:

- Embedded National-Tactical Receiver (ENTR)
 - Miniaturized IBR radio to PCI form factor
- Leatherneck PELT
 - Enhanced processing for ELINT geolocation
- Mini Transmitter (MTX)
 - Mobil device that reports the unit location for Blue Force Tracking